

FREE

# Valley Women's Voice

OCTOBER 1979

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 8

On September 13, 1979, the one-year anniversary of Seta Rampersad's death, the 3rd World Women's Task Force held a vigil at the Courthouse in Northampton. Following are excerpts from a speech given by Suman Bohn at the noon demonstration and excerpts from a speech by Jamila Gaston at the evening vigil.

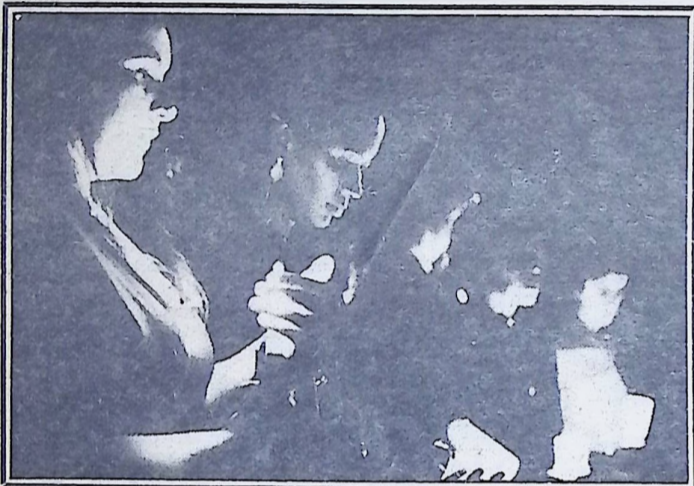
Suman Bohn: A year ago today Seta Rampersad was found dead at Motel 6 in South Deerfield...We do not know the exact cause of her death. What we do know is that the local judicial system has done a brilliant job of making sure that those responsible for her death have gotten away completely free.

We remember the ugliness of Seta's death, how 3 people-- Jimmy the Greek, Brian Pitzer, Carol Newton--watched her die for 11 hours, threw her in the shower, didn't call for help. We remember the professional slickness of District Attorney Simons as he gave excuse after excuse for not getting involved in the case. We remember that State Attorney General Belloit still hasn't found time to respond to our request to reinvestigate what happened that night. Yes, we remember these things and we know what they mean: when a person of color or an ordinary working person or woman gets slaughtered, the people in power don't necessarily view this as an important event.

A lot of ordinary people seem to know that what happened to Seta was wrong. If only the courts and judges and DA's had the intelligence that regular day-to-day people have, then we wouldn't be here at this moment raising our voices in sorrow and anger. The reality is that our collective sense of justice- of right and wrong- is about 100 times more accurate than a whole courtroom full of District Attorneys with wads of cotton stuffed in their ears.

In certain situations the so-called justice system works in one way, while in other situations it works differently. Throwing black people into jail on flimsy evidence is OK. But hunting down those who have committed crimes against black people and other Third World people like Seta Rampersad, that's something else- it doesn't have the same kind of high priority.

Seta Rampersad-- a woman of color, a daughter of working people-- traveled all the way from Trinidad in the Caribbean to Northampton, Massachusetts to die. In that journey is summed up the lives of literally millions of Third World People from colonized countries. The only proper way to mourn for Seta is to make her live on symbolically in the general struggle we are waging for true justice and true freedom...In Seta's name, we are going to build a strong political blockade of people ready to fight for local justice. Both those of us from the Third World Woman's Task Force and the Committee Against Repression are in this fight to the end/ Anyone else who wants to work with us is more than welcome...This is how we will continue to mourn for Seta. This is how we will grieve over her death.



Women at the vigil for Seta Rampersad (Photo courtesy of Springfield Daily News).

## Did Justice Die With Seta?

Gerri Kuhns and Meladi Moku-bum of Third World Women's Taskforce carry a coffin into the Captains Table in memory of Seta Rampersad's death.



Jamila Gaston: When Seta was conceived her parents dreamed of the day when she would take her place among the professionals, among the somebody's, among the black creators. They did not know how she would die- at twenty years, not yet a full grown woman, still a student-- they didn't know she would die alone, abandoned; the victim of people without values, without any sense of morality. And we didn't know then that we would be here to remember Seta Rampersad; UMass senior, waitress, somebody's daughter-sister-friend. Seta Rampersad's death has moved us to organize around the issues which snatched her from life. Nobody dreamed that this is what her end would mean.

Shortly before she died Seta told friends how the last months had been very difficult and trying times. She called her mother a few days before she was found dead to say that she had gone away to North Carolina with some friends because things had become too complicated. She told her mother that she would explain everything when she came home. She never got home. On this night one year ago Seta Rampersad's body was found along in Motel 5 in South Deerfield.

When people began to ask questions, the legal system's officials tried to obscure matters. They had an inquest in response to public demands for one but they made sure to carefully prevent people from knowing too much. The courts, the police, the District Attorneys, and the witnesses and accomplices in Seta's death would like to let the case be closed. The people who are here tonight and the sympathizers who are not will not allow that to happen.

These quiet New England towns where the rugged people of the United States live so comfortably in the belief that they are good, decent and civilized. In New England, where there exists the strongest liberal elements in the nation, where there are few violent, ugly huge cities and its accompanying problems, where there are few memories of ugly race hatred, where there are lovely rolling green hills and little houses and children go to school and learn, in New England Seta Rampersad was found dead; in New England the courts and the police have cooperated in not wanting to know how she died or why; in New England racism and political corruption have raised their ugly heads. They will not go away because people ignore them or because legal technicians

choose to pretend they cannot see what has happened.

Why didn't District Attorney Whalen follow up questioning on the time discrepancies and conflicting testimonies of Jimmy the Greek, Brian Pitzer, and Carol Newton?

Why weren't charges made against these three for self-admitted use of cocaine and other controlled substances?

Why didn't police do routine chemical tests on the objects in the room? Why were no fingerprints taken?

Why didn't the court even charge Seta's companions with negligent homicide for leaving her alone to die after they watched her for ten hours while she was dying?

Why has D.A. Simons refused to follow up with an investigation into the possibility that others were involved in some way with Seta's death?

Why are the people who gave information about the involvement of businessmen and politicians in the area saying they are afraid to testify in court?

The men in the legal system seem to think they have the power to decide. But the issues in the case of Seta Rampersad remain unresolved. And what has happened to Seta Rampersad is part of what people, working people, poor people, black people, foreign born people have come to expect from the American Dream.

Like D.A. Callahan told us it sure would sound ugly if people knew some things surrounding the death of Seta Rampersad. People might find out that some of their neighbors and some of the people they do business for and some of the people who serve in public office are perhaps condoning activities people are even embarrassed to read about. When the details surrounding the death of Seta Rampersad's death emerged last year people called the Third World Women's Task Force and talked to members of the Committee Against Repression and told of a variety of ugly problems which surface with this case being reopened. In a technical sense their concerns and their information can be kept out of court if Simon and Bellotti insist that that be the case. And we can expect precious little from others in these towns when words like heroin trade, cocaine, prostitution and coverup are connected, to young women from the University.

When you're white and wealthy your life will be all right, when you're black stay back-- whether it's North Carolina, New York, Massachusetts, or Soweto, South Africa doesn't make much difference. If you're white and poor don't expect much more.

None of us know how our lives will end, or those of our mothers, sisters, friends. May it be that our lives be dedicated to the struggle for life, for happiness, for freedom and justice. May we be satisfied that the way we lived helps to create a world where we can all live in peace and security; where there is equality for all of us. Let us work with ourselves and each other to prevent ignorance from keeping us apathetic.

# News Briefs

## Marital Rape a Crime

James Chretien, 33, in the first such case in Massachusetts history, was convicted September 21 for raping his wife. Carmelina and her two children had been living apart from Chretien but were not legally separated or divorced. He had broken into his wife's apartment last Feb. 8 and raped her. Chretien was also found guilty of breaking and entering his wife's apartment, which carries a minimum sentence of ten years. He is yet to be sentenced.

## Papal Boycott

Sister Frances Froelich, President of the Boston Archdiocesan Sisters' Senate, which represents 41 religious orders in the Boston area, says she will boycott the papal Mass on Boston Common. She said that many nuns were irritated by the Pope's refusal to allow women to participate in distributing communion wafers.

The Women's Ordination Conference, leaders of the equal rights for women movement within the Church, said they were outraged by the Pope's decision. WOC, which seeks admission of women into the priesthood, said that women have been allowed since 1973 to help distribute Communion as special ministers of the Eucharist. 2,000 to 4,000 women in the Boston area alone have participated as special ministers.

In the coming papal Masses, women will be restricted to reading Scripture and bearing offertory gifts.

In 1977, the Vatican declared that women cannot be priests because they lack a physical resemblance to Christ.

## A Little Tip

Businesswomen are the best tippers at restaurants, while their male counterparts like to pocket some of the tip money, according to a survey of 1,000 waitresses and waiters done by Career Travel, a network for traveling businesswomen.

## A Woman's Place

A Yale study by assistant professor Carol Tropp Schreiber reveals that men in "women's" fields have much less difficulty being accepted by fellow workers than women moving into traditionally "male" jobs. Because women

were the first to make the transition, the way has been harder for them. They show much more kindness to men entering women's fields than men do for women. Women in male fields expressed worry about lack of ability, while men in women's fields pressure themselves to do better than women, so they work especially hard.

## It's FBI Time Again

The FBI has admitted spreading rumors that actress Jean Seberg, who committed suicide recently, had become pregnant by a member of the Black Panther Party. They had sought to discredit her because of her support of the Black Nationalist cause.

Seberg had been seven months pregnant when she first read an accusatory article by columnist Joyce Haber. She went into immediate labor and her child was born dead. Since then, according to ex-husband Romain Gary, she attempted suicide every anniversary of her child's death, and this year, succeeded.

FBI Director William H. Webster says that the days when the FBI used derogatory information to discredit advocates of unpopular causes are gone forever.



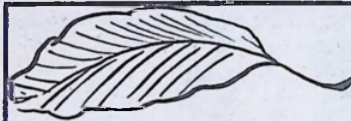
Graphic by Dianne Sippelle

## Progress in Public Education

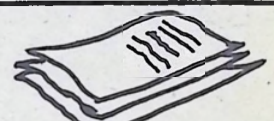
According to a survey by the Project on Equal Education Rights, Vermont ranks highest overall of the New England states in women's progress in public education. This includes the areas of high school interscholastic athletes, women high school superintendents, and the percentage of women in traditionally male vocational courses. Connecticut ranks next, then Mass., Maine, New Hampshire and Rhode Island.

## The Bottom Line

According to Evelyn Kaye, in a Parents magazine article, the work done by a housewife with two pre-school children would bring her \$35,000 a year if she were paid at the prevailing rate of managerial work, \$4 per hour; house care, \$3 driving, \$5, and day care, \$4.



## Letters



Dear Sisters,

I am sure you will be interested in learning this, if you don't already know about it. To catch up with the delightful Brutality Chic wave, LOIS JEANS & JACKETS have put out a lovely poster where we can admire this True Male brutalizing a Fox-so-sexy-the-poor-Guy-can't-help-it! It has been out for a very long time now and I haven't seen or heard of any female protestation!

I don't know if it has been circulating just here in Canada. Neither do I know if there are two separate companies (LOIS in the U.S. and Canada), although I doubt it. Perhaps this is important as far as the right to boycott is concerned. But in the end, what does it change? For that kind of sadistic male humor, apologies will not satisfy us.

In sisterstruggle,  
Another one  
who refuses to forget  
the dignity of our womanhood.

Dear Sisters:

We wish to respond to "Deciding Our Fate" (an article in the Aug. issue of the Valley Women's Voice). We were among the participants at EIRTAW and

think that there are some serious misunderstandings in the description of the conference in your article. The following is not for the purpose of personally criticizing any of the workshop organizers but to demonstrate that traditional medical ethics have betrayed women as severely as the medical profession, and that a conference organized out of this academic discipline cannot speak fully to women's needs.

We want to clarify that the conference was *not* a feminist conference per se. It was intended to bring together not only people of different disciplines and professions but those with widely varying ideas and ideologies. There was a wide range not just of feminist views but of liberal, conservative, and reactionary interests represented and included in the presentations.

The workshop was also not an "analysis by women." There is a great danger in accepting a selected group as speaking for *all* women. Specifically, there are many working class women and women of color who are politically active and organizing on their own behalf, who do not necessarily define themselves as "feminist." The issue is

not only whether feminists were adequately represented (we weren't) but even more importantly whether the conference can be seen as legitimately representing all women, as the title implied.

Furthermore, the conference was not only attended by women but also comprised 15% of the participants as a way of legitimizing it so that the National Science Foundation would grant the necessary money.

The conference was organized from the top down, with little flexibility or room for input from participants. There was insufficient time planned for discussion among participants after the panel presentations, and no preparation at all for resolutions for action. What was seen as the final version of the conference would not have occurred without a lot of work behind the scenes by a group of women who came together to draw attention to the contradictions in the structure of the workshop. We were able to create a group which other women could identify with and join, which supported some of their changes, and which in turn strongly influenced the direction of the

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## Collective Statement

The Valley Women's Voice is founded on the principles of feminist advocacy journalism. We are committed to providing a forum for all women to discuss ideas, publicize women's resources and events, and celebrate our heritage, as well as advocating social change. As a collective, we aim toward exploring a non-hierarchical structure while also recognizing leadership skills of individuals within the group.

We welcome work from all women writers, artists, and poets. Material we feel to be racist, sexist or homophobic won't be published. Articles should have a definite connection to women's issues, and/or a feminist analysis. We particularly welcome coverage on lesbian, Third World, and poor women's issues.

### PHOTOGRAPHERS! GRAPHIC ARTISTS!

We need your help for coverage of events. If you would like to share that fine womanenergy and contribute, call the VVV office, 545-0883, Tuesday and Thursday mornings and ask for Marcia.

The CALENDAR deadline is October 15. All calendar and announcement listings are free. For more information call 545-0883.

ADVERTISING Deadline is October 18. For Display rates and information, call 584-3394, Margie.

SUBMISSION Deadline for November is Oct. 15. Try to keep articles under 5 pages, and double-spaced, please!! We can't guarantee we will print all submissions; this decision is collectively made. Submissions accompanied with a stamped, self-addresses envelope will be returned within 3 months. Due to space limitations, we sometimes have to postpone publication of articles. All major editorial changes are made in conjunction with the author. Any questions or ideas- call the VVV office, Tues. or Thurs. mornings, 545-0883.

### STAFF

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Evie Soalt  
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# A Taste of Honey In Michigan

By Jean Esther and Lucinda Cook

"Womyn, Womyn! I have some wonderful news for you. Are you ready for this one?" Therese Edell's voice opens across a green valley of beautiful womyn. "We are the largest gathering of Lesbians in the history of the World! Can you dig that? Doesn't that knock your socks off!"

Picture a valley 100,000 times smaller than our own dear Pioneer, filled tightly and comfortably amidst wood and glen with 8,000 Lesbians!

The fourth Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, August 23-26, was a 4 day, lived out fantasy of life solely with womyn. After many hours of being on the road, it was such comfort to be welcomed and organized, in the rolling darkness, by strong womyn doing 'security.' We loaded our gear onto one of the "shuttles" that brought us further into the woods, away from our cars. Inside, it was a world different from the one we have known and lived 'out here' in society.

In the morning, bowl and spoon in hand, we picked our way through the multi-colored village of tents down to the main path, and joined throngs of womyn on their way to breakfast - many bare-chested. There truly were womyn from everywhere in the U.S., as well as from Canada, England, Ireland, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. We might add here that most of the womyn were white. A fact not surprising, but damnable nonetheless, when most of the performers were white, and the workshops geared toward white womyn's experience.

One of the most constantly amazing things about the festival was the fact that it worked. Not only that, but it was womyn making it all work well. Above all there was a common sense of responsibility, trust, honesty, caring and nurturing of each other and the land.

Each woman did at least a three-hour work shift in one area of work, vital to the smooth running of the festival. It was at workshifts that the style of womyn working became apparent; the work was fun, made so by the ease and intimacy between us all. Even staying up all night around a campfire doing security, there were women to share information and skills with, stories to tell, tea to drink. Our spirit was especially high, doing things for all of us as a whole.

Other work areas were: security around the clock at the two accesses to the festival grounds; Shuttle to transport womyn from parking to the main area. These vans and trucks were the only vehicles allowed 'inside'; Garbagewomyn; Food-cooking, making salads, cutting melons, serving, etc; Registration; Childcare for girl children; Parking around the clock; and the Womb.

In the Health Care tent, familiarly known as The Womb, various womyn healers shared their skills, time and energy during shifts of all hours bringing back the power of the witch-womyn healer. There were intake workers, med-

ical doctors, chiropractors, masseurs, womyn doing bodywork, herbalists, nurses and emotional health-care workers from various backgrounds. The waiting-room was often just outside the red and white striped tent around a campfire or in the sunshine. There was always a pot of boiling water on the portable stove ready to be poured over herbs chosen for each womyn's particular need- lots of chamomile to relax, peppermint to revitalize and many other complex concoctions put together by skilled and knowledgeable herbalists.

Another well used tent, the merchants tent, housed the skilled and creative craftswomyn of our community, selling and bartering their wares. Posters, t-shirts, record albums, books, clay pottery, and even monogrammed underwear could be found. Beautiful jewelry was made from wood, silver, pewter and shell. The labyrises, goddesses, trees, moons, and spirals from Celtic art were a visual display of revived ancient symbols of Womyn's spirit and power- artifacts certainly not present in your average american gift shop.

During the 4 festival days, over 100



Adele Chu, a Jamaican woman dances at the 4th Annual Music Festival.

workshops took place on about an acre of land. Can you imagine the energy buzzing about? Some of the workshops included; Hairbraiding; chainsaw art, building Lesbian coalitions, anti-nuke work, trade and construction work, raptime for womyn of color, dyke hoboos, disabled Lesbians, auto maintenance, alcohol and compulsive eating support, battered womyn, womyn's land, farmer as matriarch, older womyn, prostitution, incest, and even a Lesbian National Chorus.

Z Budapest called womyn together in a circle, asking each to make a garland for her hair. She spoke of the different goddesses who have been 'bastardized' by present day religions, to be looked at as evil, sexually immoral, narcissistic.



She spoke of their power, their functions and the rituals they shared. She then led us in a kissing dance that symbolized womyn coming together to celebrate pleasure. We circled into a spiral, like a snake as each woman kissed each woman she passed until all had been greeted by all. We ended in a coil, the energy transformed into a gentle closeness that rose into a chant.

Another workshop was held about Parthenogenesis. Some womyn with scientific backgrounds explained the actual biology of parthenogenesis. In the labs, eggs have divided when placed in a saline solution. The question then arose as to how to get salt water past the cervix - it would take a great amount of uncomfortable pressure to force it into the fallopian tubes. One woman noted that sperm are helped up the fallopian tubes by the contractions that occur with orgasm (they don't 'swim' up all by themselves). Put these two together, and we came up with the following appealing recipe for parthenogenetic conception; thrashing about in ecstasy in the sea, preferably under a new moon.

A workshop formed spontaneously around immigration. Many, many womyn were stopped, harassed and turned away at the Canadian border for being, or being suspected as Lesbians. One woman was turned away with "sexual deviant" stamped on her passport. This is ILLEGAL. Womyn from the National Gay Task Force urged womyn who had been harassed and searched at the border to come together and report it. The N.G.T.F. gathered this information to sue the government and demand appropriate action.

Another active workshop called womyn together to play percussion and dance. Led by members of Alive!, womyn learned basic dance steps and chants to Yemaya, African Goddess of the sea, while others jammed together on percussion. The practice run on Saturday prepared for a procession on Sunday which moved throughout the festival grounds. Womyn were nude or dressed in white. It was such a pleasure to see and feel our naked bodies as powerful, strong, sensuous and most of all, treated with reverence and respect. One woman's comment inside the Womb, "It's really tribal out here today, isn't it?"

And so you see, the concerts weren't the only aspect of this four day union. They did most certainly, though, highlight our evenings. Our charming M.C.

Therese Edell was an entertainer herself. She connected the concerts together with her wit, humility and sincerity, which created such a loving atmosphere. Therese always emphasized the positive: how wonderful we all were, how the festival was happening and working because of the energy every woman put back into it, and couldntwenty women 'Please, please show up for security at 12:00?'

Thursday night opened with Alix Dobkin after a sudden rainstorm came to a graceful end. Alix's music filled the natural amphitheatre with spark and fire. She sang her anger powerfully, she sang of lovers' changes, and still remaining friends. She called out her good friend Kay Gardner (a surprise appearance) who, together with Alix, played and sang, 'Every Woman can be a Lesbian.' For her encore, Alix dazzled us (may have even shocked some) with rhinestone pants, electric guitar and a fine rendition of 'Get down and Boogie' which got most of us off our seats.

Holly Near opened with a broad smile and 'Imagine My Surprise'. The womyn-only space allowed Holly to sing certain songs she otherwise wouldn't have. She called on Rhiannon of Alive! to do an amazing orgasmic harmony to Chris Williamson's 'Waterfall'. Holly also performed a new song about her political work against nuclear power. She introduced J.T. Thomas, her pianist, who brought old time rag music and played her own piece, 'The Crush'.

Linda Shear opened Friday evening with her Lesbian only concert. Linda talked of honouring all Lesbians, including dykes who are not feminists. By acknowledging an audience as solely Lesbian, she enhanced a feeling of the power and unity of being Lesbians, surviving together. Linda led us in a combined song and sign taught by Tryna Hope. "We are on a river. We are on a journey." One side of the audience directed their flashlights to the other side so we could watch the beauty of thousands of Lesbians signing and singing our magic together.

Rashida Shah, a new face in womyn's music to some of us, came with three other Black womyn to bring out a tradition of great blues and gospel. Although Rashida has written her own music, she chose not to present it, without telling us why.

Gwen Avery dazzled us with her Saturday night performance; of course giving us her sensual presentation of

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# 59¢ and the ERA

Julia Starzyk

59¢.

Remember that figure. As a woman, that figure is of bread and butter importance to you. It means that for every dollar a man earns, a woman earns 59¢! It means that women today earn less (as compared to men) than they did 20 years ago; in 1977 female wage increases dropped 2%— from 7.8 to 5.8%

This, despite the facts that over half the population is female and that today, more than half of adult women are gainfully employed in the marketplace. Yet most women still do jobs that only women do, and these jobs are overwhelmingly underpaid. 60% of all working women are clerks, saleswomen, waitresses and hairdressers; 94.2% of all typists and 97.6% of all secretaries are female. Yet, for every salesman's dollar earned, a saleswoman earns 40¢. A secretary with 13.2 years of education earns 38% less than a truckdriver with 9.0 years of education. A nurse with 14.2 years of education earns 5.8% less than a deliveryman.

While more women are entering the professions and trades, becoming doctors, lawyers, electricians, carpenters, farmers, etc., less than 2% of all registered apprentices are women, and only 1% of women hold top jobs. Only 5% of employed women earn \$10,000 to \$15,000 a year, versus 22% for men; while 4,173,000 men working in the private sector earn \$25,000 a year, 140,000 women— or .3%— earn that much.

The gap between the average woman's and the average man's pay keeps widening. A 1978 U.S. Civil Rights Commission report showed that since 1960, women have been unable to make any significant strides toward economic and social equality with males. Women still earn only half as much as white males, and women with college degrees earn less than men with high school educations. There is "virtually no financial ladder" for women, since there has been little or no improvement in the earning of full-time women between the ages of 20 and 44. And women who work full-time inside the home have little to no economic security.

The laws and statutes regulating sex discrimination in employment and education are simply not adequate and contain major loopholes. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment, has exemptions for small businesses (employing under 15 people), the armed forces, and even the United States Congress. Courts have begun to give narrow interpretation to Title VII, so that employers have been allowed to maintain certain discriminatory seniority systems and pay schedules which do not reflect equal pay for equal work.

The treatment of sex under the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment often seems to depend on the whim of the court. In the 1977 Vorchheimer case, involving sex-segregated public schools, the Supreme Court upheld a ruling which denied a young woman's admittance to Philadelphia's Central High School, a public school of superior quality, solely on the basis of her sex. The court has held that sex discrimination is not a "suspect classification" under the Equal Protection Clause. The most recent pronouncement concerning sex discrimination was made by Justice Powell in the Bakke case: "The court has never viewed such classification (i.e., sex classification) as inherently suspect or as comparable to racial or ethnic classifications for the purpose of equal protection analysis."

The Civil Rights Commission report has shown that in Federal Statutes alone, over 800 sections of the U.S. Code discriminate on the basis of sex, and that state laws are replete with provisions that are sex discriminatory. In fact, study after study of governmental and private agencies have demonstrated that existing Constitutional guarantees do not provide full rights for American women. What all this means is that the need for the Equal Rights Amendment is greater today than it was in 1972 when Congress first passed the amendment and sent it to the states for ratification.

With all the furor it has caused, you might think the Equal Rights Amendment was at least book-size, containing all kinds of statements relating to women and men. It doesn't. Section I, the "heart" of the Amendment, contains just 24 words, which declare that people in this country, be they women or men, will be treated fairly and justly under the law. It does not mean that women and men are exactly the same; it means that people's rights under the law cannot be denied or abridged solely because of their sex.

The Equal Rights Amendment is not a nicety, a cleaning up of an historical error, or a symbolic gesture. For women, it is an economic necessity. What is at stake is constitutional equality for women in this century, and economic independence for women—whether women will continue to earn only half of what men earn, and whether women will be forever relegated to the dependence which low wages and low status impose. The ERA directly relates to poverty and the working poor. It is necessary in order to establish a national policy and to set a standard for the elimination of discrimination based on sex.

As women, we know what it's like to live as second-class citizens in a country where the laws are 1.) made by men, 2.) interpreted by men, and 3.) enforced by men. If you doubt this relevance,

remember that it took a separate amendment, the 19th, and 72 years of struggle and sacrifice before the right of suffrage was extended to women in this country. And in March of 1979, the Mississippi state legislature once again turned down the 19th Amendment! Seven of the 15 states which have yet to ratify the ERA did not pass women's right to vote until after 1950

Why is it so important to have an Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution? If you remember from your civics classes, the Constitution is the supreme law of the land— overriding state and federal laws. The Equal Rights Amendment will make it clear, once and for all, that discrimination based on sex will not be tolerated in this country at any level— local, state or federal. It will finally write women into the constitution and remove any ambiguities concerning sex discrimination. Not a bad piece of legislation for just 24 words!

Already 35 states, containing more than 75% of the population in this country, have ratified this Amendment. Support for the ERA remains strong, and, in fact, continues to grow. Only three more states are needed for ratification.

Then why is ratification taking so long? The reason is the well-organized,

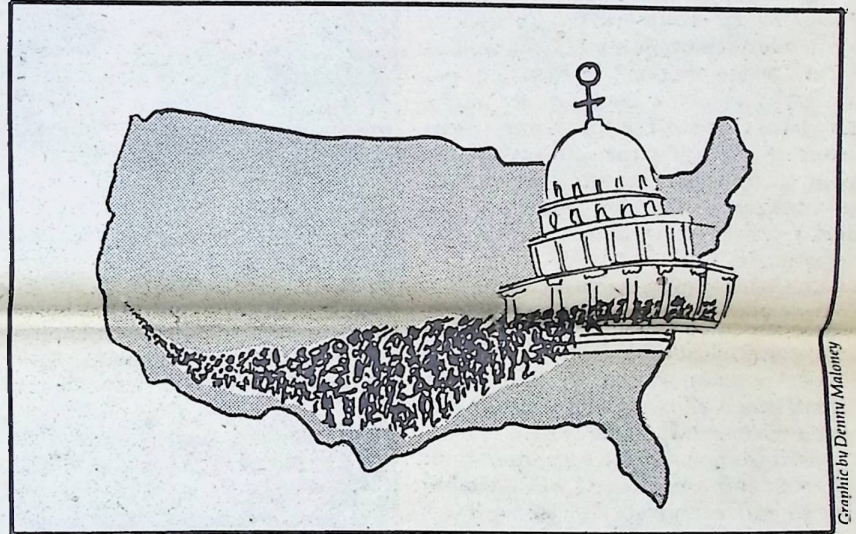
House and Senate floors stand in the way of ratification of the 27th Amendment.

Time is running out. In October of 1978, ERA proponents achieved the "impossible" and won an extension of time from the original deadline of March 22, 1979. There are only three years left to win ratification; the current time limit is June 30, 1982. The extension was won because millions of people wrote Congress and the President and lobbied at home and in Washington. Hundreds of organizations worked together in one of the largest national campaigns in our legislative history because their memberships believed that "there could be no time limit on equality."

What is at stake now is not only constitutional equality for women in this century. Failure to win ratification now will mean that what gains women have made in the past ten to fifteen years may well be eroded and erased. Already some of these rights are being chipped away. Every future effort on behalf of women's rights may well be dismissed with the excuse that when the ERA failed, it "proved" that women did not want equality.

The National Organization for Women is launching a new National ERA Campaign. Even though Massachusetts has ratified the Amendment and has passed a state ERA modeled after it, in the final analysis we are still an unratified country. The ultimate question

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well-financed right-wing minority whose political philosophy has fought social reforms of all kinds— from civil rights to minimum wage to labor law reform. In state after state this minority has effectively kept the ERA bottled up in one little committee after another. In Virginia, for example, the vote in one committee has been 12-8 against passing the Amendment to the floor of the Assembly of Delegates. That means that three votes have prevented the entire Virginia House from ever voting on the ERA for the past seven years. Proponents of the Amendment have estimated that as few as a dozen key votes placed on various committees and in various

### The Complete Text of THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

#### Section 1

Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

#### Section 2.

The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

#### Section 3.

This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

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Kim Christensen, Elaine McCrate, Renee Toback, Ann Ferguson, Karen Lederer (Members of the UMass Socialist-Feminist Union)

One day this August, two young girls, ages nine and eleven, were raped while playing in a playground in North Amherst. The following Saturday, over one hundred residents gathered for a vigil in town to demonstrate their outrage and concern over the incident. Organizers of the vigil made three suggestions for protective measures: first, that there be police continually at the playground; second, that children only be permitted in the playground when accompanied by an adult; and third, that self-defence courses be taught to area children in the schools.

While we wish to express our solidarity with those outraged women and men who protested this brutal crime, we would also like to probe this subject more deeply; to examine the reactions to this incident and the suggestions made more closely in order that we might begin to understand and combat the problem of rape on a more comprehensive and lasting basis.

Rape is not just another crime of violence. It is a crime perpetrated almost exclusively upon women *because* we are women in a male-oriented society, and the perpetrators are *always* men. This crucial fact is often left out during the outrage and anguish which follow individual incidents of rape. If we are to understand why men (in increasing numbers) rape women, we must begin not only to examine the system of male dominance and power-the patriarchy- which produces rape, but to understand the function which rape (and similar crimes of violence against women) play in maintaining that system of power.

Rape is a crime which strikes women of all ages, from the youngest girls to elderly women. It is a crime which renders a woman totally powerless, vividly demonstrating to her that she is unable to control even her own body. *Even if we personally have not been the direct victim of an assault, rape still controls our behavior and distorts our self-image in more ways than we generally imagine.* We are advised to live on a "rape schedule"- to stay locked in the house after dark, or only to venture out with a male escort; we are told it is unwise for us to go certain places, to wear certain kinds of clothes; we are told that we shouldn't hitch-hike, that we shouldn't work night shifts- and on and on, all to protect us from the threat of male violence. Viewed in this manner, rape is a weapon of political control-

# ENDING RAPE

terrorism- for it undermines our faith in our own power and in the power of other women, and keeps us afraid and dependent upon men for "protection"- a dependency which can only serve to reinforce that power (and the sexual, economic and social benefits which that power provides.)

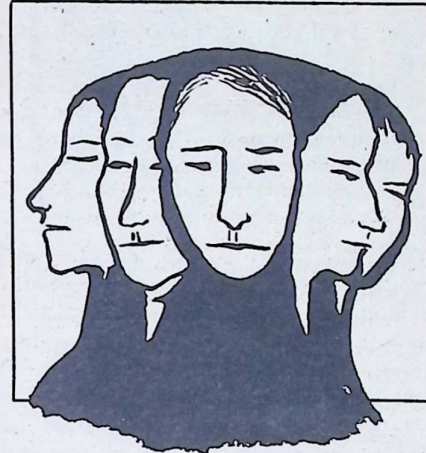
It is through the sexual division of labor in the nuclear family that men and women first learn these patterns of dominance and dependency. Women learn that they are primarily responsible for parenting and nurturant behavior; men learn to equate masculinity with force and the ability to impose one's will onto another. Combined with women's inferior economic, sexual, and social power in both the individual family and society at large, this creates a situation where everyday frustrations from any source- the job (or lack thereof), homelife, etc.- are often violently vented against women, and such violence is largely overlooked by the larger community and is thus legitimized.

There are also many ways in which our profit-centered economic system has served to increase women's vulnerability. Increased job mobility for men and the expectation that women will follow their husbands has eroded female support systems and kinship networks and thus increased women's isolation and vulnerability in the nuclear family. Women's increased participation in the labor force and in the public sphere has exposed us to more danger, so long as violence against women is seen as an **INDIVIDUAL** problem, rather than a sickness in society which requires community-wide effort for its elimination. And, finally, we must not underestimate the impact of the multi-million dollar pornography industry which creates and panders to the most misogynist sexual tastes by equating sexuality with rape and violence, by treating women and girls as sexual objects instead of human persons, and by spreading outright lies about the masochistic desires of women to be raped, tortured, and battered.

Rape, then, is far from an "individual problem" of "sick men"; rather it is a

symptom of woman's vulnerability- of our lack of physical social, sexual and economic power under patriarchy. Bearing this in mind, we must be sure that any solutions which we advocate serve to *empower* us- to decrease our isolation and helplessness which are at the root of this problem, and do not serve to increase such dependency.

This is one reason why we would like to see prevention strategies adopted other than the first suggestion made by the organizers of the vigil- namely, in-



Graphic by Denny Maloney

creased police surveillance. For although the fear which sparked such a request is certainly valid, there are several problems involved in relying upon the criminal justice system to ensure our safety.

First, in a society and an economy such as ours, the criminal justice system is *inherently* racist and class-biased-both in the "protection" it offers and in the "justice" it meters out. The fact that this system is a major prop for white power, class power, and male power should be borne in mind by any group advocating increased reliance upon it. And secondly, as we have seen, police protection is largely an "after-the-fact" affair which may be used to women's advantage in individual cases, but which does not begin to deal with the basic problem of our powerlessness. Therefore, while we realize that in the short-run, women may be forced to deal with the criminal

justice system because we have so few alternatives, we feel that any long-term strategy of police protection will be doomed to failure.

In the long run, elimination of rape will involve basic changes in the structures and attitudes of society which perpetrate male power over women-the family, the economy, popular culture, etc. In the shorter run, we would support those measures which would serve to increase women's power, and which would demonstrate that rape is a political issue, not only a personal tragedy. We can begin by making rape and violence against women a public issue (for example, by publicizing the fact that one-third of all American women will be raped sometime in their lives, and that approximately 40% of all wives are physically abused at some point by their husbands), and by struggling to develop a social consciousness which does not find violence against women to be humorous, or portray it as sexually stimulating. This means not only severe community condemnation of rape whenever it occurs, but also critical viewing of the media to watch for- and react to- misogynist images.

The conditioned passivity and poor physical condition of many women is another factor which contributes to the successful use of violence and threats of violence in the victimization of women. We should therefore support programs of physical education for women, including confrontation and assertiveness training, which would give us viable alternative responses to threatening situations other than the traditional "feminine" response of submission. Even a physically disabled woman who is unable to train in a martial art or other physical form of self-defence can benefit from assertiveness training, both in terms of reduced risk of violence, and in awareness of her own personal power. Finally, community involvement programs such as whistle alerts and shelter houses (where women who have been, or believe that they are about to be, victims of assault can go for assistance) serve to educate the community around issues of violence against women.

Women have just begun to look for rape prevention strategies that unite our short-term tactics with long-term solutions, ending capitalist-patriarchy. The existing system's failure to propose alternatives to dependence should not discourage us, but rather increase our determination to devise genuinely progressive alternatives.

## LESBIAN PEOPLES

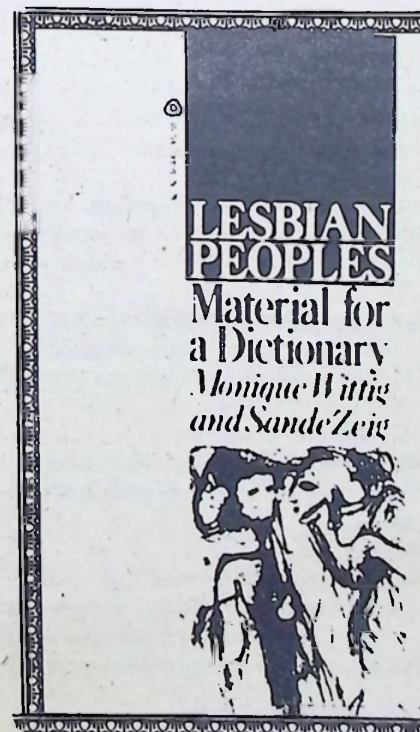
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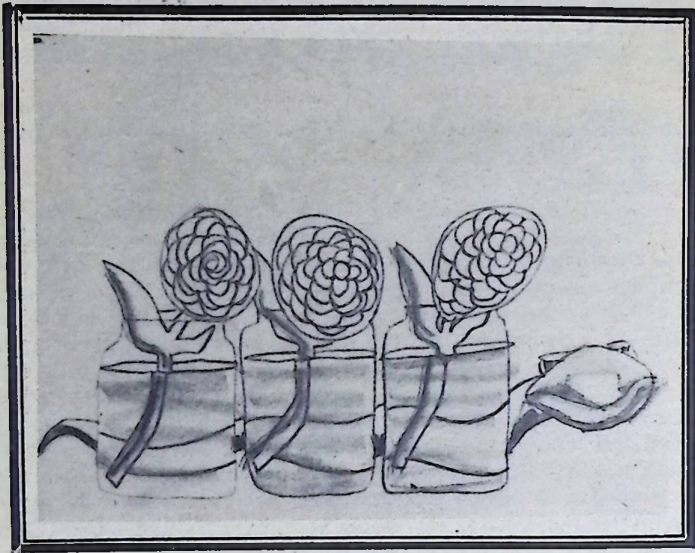
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## Womenspeak

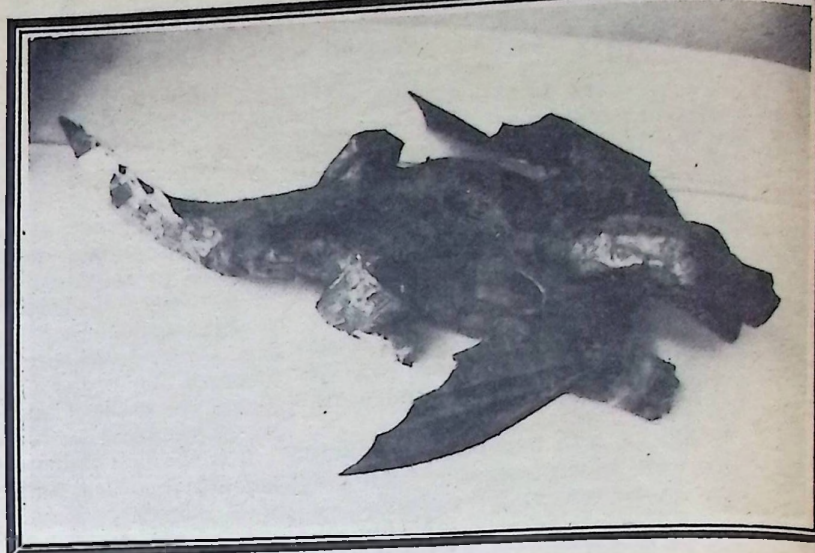


Because of the insubstantial response we received to our request for Womenspeak pieces for October, we have decided not to run it this month. We feel that this is an opportunity for Valley women to air your views in a place where you will be read and heard. Too much silence will bury us all. We welcome a variety of viewpoints, and you don't need to be a writer (or even sign your name) to send us your ideas and views.

We are rerunning the question we posed in September: *What does lesbianism mean to you, a) as a personal lifestyle; b) as a political commitment; c) as a lesbian; d) as a non-lesbian.* Please keep your submissions under 500 words. Deadline: Oct. 15.



Snake and 3; A Cycles of Self-Images. Summer, 1974.



Millicent the baby (Papier mache) Dragon. Summer, 1972.

By Lisa Buck

At last we have a chance to see and celebrate Kaymarion's creations. For those of you who don't know her, Kaymarion is an artist/teacher/activist who has lived and worked in the Valley women's community for eleven years.

During the month of November there will be 60 selected images on the walls of the East End Loft of the Violet Ray Theatre Arts Building (19 Hawley St, Northampton). Kaymarion will also be at the loft giving a different multi-media presentation of her work each weekend. These will include all her visual imagery from 1959 to the present, recorded in approximately 500 slides. She's also working on incorporating home movies, voice tapes and much more.

The theme of the first weekend presentation (Nov. 3rd and 4th) is "Becoming a Lesbian- 1959 to 1969." On November 10th and 11th she will continue with Part II: "Becoming a Sister- 1969 to 1975." She will bring the work up through her present creations with Part III: "Becoming a Mother- 1975 to Future" on November 18th and 19th. The last weekend, the 28 and 29th, will involve a whole cycle summary and a closing celebration.

How can we begin to comprehend the impact Kaymarion's work has had on women in the valley? At an informal preview of her slideshow I saw many familiar images-- a compelling portrait of Virginia Woolf, posters publicizing events at Everywoman's Center, goddess imagery, intensely colored mandalic paintings, moon calendars...as well as drawings from letters to friends, sketches from a lesbian drawing support group, and graphics for a feminist coloring book.

Her pictures together with the stories she tells create an atmosphere of looking through a feminist family photo album. Hers is a Journey-in-images, one that reflects both her inner growth and the growth of the women's movement in the Valley. She withholds nothing: "It scares me to put on this art show. It's so different from anything I've seen, and it's as personal as I can get."

In a recent interview, Kaymarion talked with me about the periods of her life delineated in her show.

### Becoming a Lesbian ★ 1959-1969

KM: I'm an old lesbian, or "old gay" or bar lesbian. I came out as a lesbian before the movement; so the stories that those pictures tell is part of the old lesbian culture that young political lesbians hear about, but don't really know about.

LB: Like when we were talking before you said, "The only other lesbians I knew of..."

KM:...Being in the army, the very straight relationships that got formed, butch/femme roles and the part the bars played in them, who I was hanging out with... You know, I thought I was a gay boy back then- I was a butch. I hung out with gay boys and related to women as sexual objects. I didn't know how to relate to women, I'd never had friends...

Kaymarion pointed out that for lesbians of her generation, becoming a lesbian wasn't seen as an 'alternative'. Whereas, she said, women today may "choose to be lesbian for intellectual, political wahoo...I didn't have any choice."

KM: I fell in love with a woman, my commitments and attractions were to women- I was a lesbian. I didn't have any fancy intellectual rationalizations for it. So it wasn't an alternative- and the relationships I had were as stereotypic as you could get.

LB: There was no political context for you.

KM: None. This is the way life was, I tried out what was 'normal': being married (as a lesbian), having a little house in the woods with umpteen pets, trying to get a little money, education...

LB: And then what happened?

KM: I got politicized and broke loose. I started school and got radicalized. I could come out of the closet at UMass...I never had. When I was in the army, I'd been investigated three times for being a lesbian. Talk about a repressive culture. I learned how to construct a straight personality in the world. All of us did.

# KAYMARION'S ART SHOW

### Becoming a Sister ★ 1969-1975

Kaymarion has been involved in inventing, organizing, and publicizing an incredible range of lesbian and feminist political events and networks of communication in the Valley. She was coordinator of the Student Homophile League during 1971-72, involved with the Valley Women's Center and the Women's Institute during 1972, mother of the Green Street co-operative from '72-'78. During this time, she coordinated such ventures as the 1973 Conference on Rape, the 1975 University Women's Conference, and the Common Woman Restaurant's Exhibit committee. She has spoken on and facilitated workshops on such diverse topics as The Woman-Identified-Woman, Rape and Incest, Women and Art, Feminist Media, Masturbation, Women's Rituals, Astrology, Journal Writing, Lesbian Relationships, and others.

Kaymarion spoke about her radicalization in the early 1970's and changes in her relationships with women.

KM: I didn't like who I was or what I was doing and I finally heard other people saying, It's not just you- it's the institution, the value system.

LB: So something had to be created? From seeing your work it seems you used visual images to explore what could be changed. Its like a thinking out loud in images...

KM: What I thought of first was that I wanted a different relationship with women...I was making my own changes and statements- but the strength to do this came from other women. At this time I immediately looked to someone else; but now, I'd say my primary relationship is with myself. I go to myself periodically for that new growth.



Drawing for etching of Virginia Woolf. Fall, 1972



Artist with "Waterbearer Sculpture", Spring 1976. This was used in the Amherst Feminist Repertory Company's (now Women's Community Theatre) production of "Women on my mind."



Ink 'Tree Drawing'. From Journal, 1974.

We will be devoting two full pages monthly to creative work by local women. Please send us your artwork, poetry, short fiction, or photography, along with a short biographical description.

### "To Change is to Create" -On Cultural Feminism

Kaymarion's work is a powerful reflection of the many changes in identity/political consciousness she's been through in the past twenty years. These images echo her belief that "we have a choice about who we become." Her work has been to "create out of myself, to create art, and to create a community." She calls herself an artist and an art teacher because she believes in creativity.

In the interview we discussed what we see as common misconceptions about creativity.

LB: People think that being creative begins and ends with traditional art forms- like turning a vision into a painting. What they don't realize is that creative power can naturally extend into the world- as you said you created your community.

KM: Right. To create is to create. It's the same process whether you are a visual artist or a mother. To create is to mold, bring into being, to give form and fill the form with energy, until it has a life of its own.

LB: Do you remember the conversation we had about International Women's Week at UMass? They had crowded all the "cultural" workshops into one day, effectively segregating the artists. We were both frustrated by the implicit 'split' between the cultural and political. You turned to me and said, "What they still don't realize is that *to change is to create!*" I think that's what the artists in the women's community have to speak of.

KM: That's what cultural feminism is about. To change, is to either destroy something so it no longer exists in the form it was, or to create something new to crowd out the old one.

LB: Like putting in a healthy plant?

KM: Right.

Join Kaymarion when she puts in her healthy plants at the East End Loft. The Exhibit can be seen weekend evenings from 7 to 10pm, with the formal presentation beginning at 8pm; during all Violet Ray events (such as their Sunday Brunches); and between classes held during the week at the loft. Saturday nights are reserved for lesbians and Sunday nights are open to all.

Call Violet Ray, 686-5886, for particulars. Admission will be \$2 at the door, for a weekend presentation, or series tickets for the whole month may be bought at a sliding fee, at Violet Ray or Womonyre Books.

Kaymarion's imagery has both been shaped by and has worked to shape the women's movement in the Valley. Her show gives Valley women a unique opportunity to reflect on our growth and to join her as she looks over her shoulder, and shares with us the path she's come on.

### Becoming a Mother ★ 1975-the Future

Kaymarion talked about how her visions often signal changes in her life. "There are these stories going on inside me, these adventures, and they come out in pictures. Then I actually go do them."

She had a recurring vision of going to a "mother-house" or convent just before she journeyed to Florida (upon learning her mother was ill with cancer), "that was preparation for going and helping my mother die of cancer, but at the time, I didn't know it."

Kaymarion has now embarked on a journey to explore the "whole meaning of what it is to be a mother" and thinks about starting her own Mother House/Convent. But, she says, "I couldn't become a mother, start my own mother house, until my mother had passed on that title to me- that mantle or shawl. I helped her make out her will; and when she died she passed on her woman-heritage to me. One of the things I'd like to do, now at the artshow is to share some of my mother's, and *her* mother's self-images and art work.

# Nuclear Energy VS. Women's Energy

By Francine Krasno

Have you seen this new bumper sticker: "More people have died in Ted Kennedy's Car than in a Nuclear Power Plant"?

Unfil recently, the only anti-nuclear bumper-stickers we saw were ones that tried to awaken us to the dangers of human exposure to radiation, the faulty technology of nuclear power plants, and the expense and hazards of nuclear waste disposal. Since the accident at the Three Mile Island plant in Harrisburg, Pa., last March, people from the right-wing to the radical left now recognize nuclear power as a major political issue.

How does nuclear power affect us as women? In what ways is nuclear power a feminist issue?

In a statement issued in May, 1979, the Feminist Anti-Nuclear Task Force explained that nuclear energy is most devastating to women because it poses serious reproductive hazards. Women and children were evacuated first after the Three Mile Island accident. Studies are now being done to determine the possible effects of radioactivity on women who were pregnant during the accident. So far, there have been no studies planned to determine the effects of radioactivity on women who were pregnant but did not know it.

The recent case of Karen Silkwood dramatizes that as workers, women are often exposed to high-level or lethal dosages of radiation. The Occupational Health and Safety Commission does not protect all workers and women are sometimes advised to be sterilized to avoid the effects of radioactivity on their reproductive organs. Women who are primary caretakers of their families must bear the ultimate responsibility for the effects of radioactivity. "The risk of genetic mutation and life-threatening disease increases with the use of nuclear power...", the Task Force Statement reads. "But women have little to say in the development and use of these technologies. We must ensure that we have control over our reproductive capabilities."

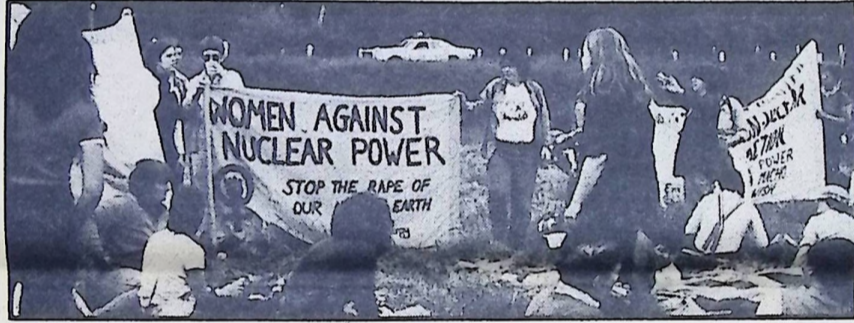
The characteristic distinguishing a feminist analysis of nuclear power from other points of view is the connection between an anti-nuclear stance and the regenerative, nurturant use of all our resources. This analysis connects the technological and economic aspects of nuclear power with the moral issue.

Ruth Rae, a Northampton resident, explains it this way: "It's knowing that life on this planet is in danger of extinction and we are rushing to that extinction. The way to stop this isn't through

building bigger and better bombs to 'protect oneself'. That is no protection. To build nuclear power plants which are harmful to humans, to wildlife, to marine life, because we need energy to maintain 'a standard of living' is not the way."

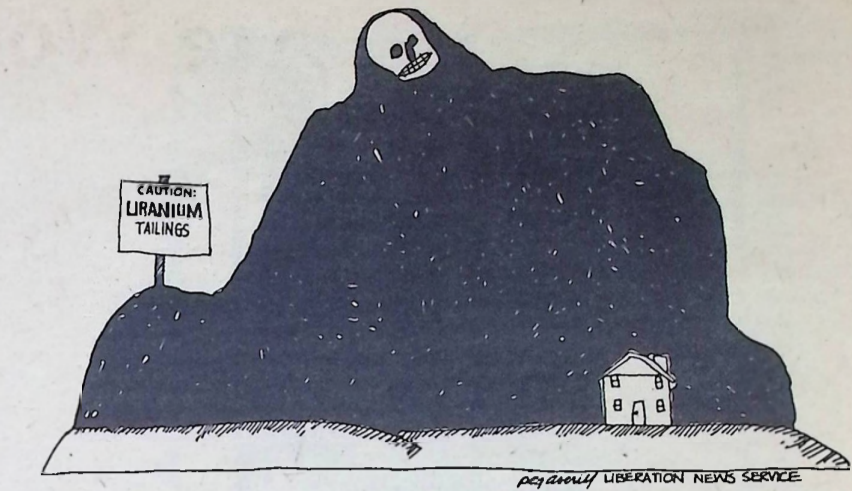
For Ruth Rae and the other members of a local group called Women Against Nuclear Destruction, the issues of nuclear weapons and nuclear power are inseparable. "As a woman, I feel totally removed from these madmen who are talking about how we have to have more military power and the whole discussion about the SALT talks. I know it's insane. And I think this comes to me from being a woman and knowing, you don't protect life by smashing other life."

According to a New York Times poll released on April 10, shortly after Three Mile Island, 66% of American women are opposed to the construction of nuclear power plants in their communities; 46% of the men responded in the same way. During the evacuation from



Harrisburg, some families split up, the women leaving with their children, the men staying to "tough it out." According to Mary Wentworth, an Amherst resident, much of the propaganda of the pro-nuclear movement is based on a sexist appeal to men to take "risks," to prove their manhood, which obscures the real issue of nuclear safety. Women have not been socialized to respond to this macho myth. "The moral equivalent of war' does not get my juices flowing," she said. "The nuclear industry could make a John Wayne poster with the words—BE A MAN, SUPPORT NUCLEAR POWER—and be instantly understood."

Women are the largest unorganized constituency in the anti-nuclear movement, which reflects a major problem within the movement: sexism. Women have yet to be integrated fully into the decision-making processes; the present political arena belongs to men. On a local level, women have become leaders and organizers, but they often have



to fight to be heard in meetings — and when they do speak, their opinions often go unacknowledged. The technological language of nuclear, solar, wind, and hydroelectric power can be intimidating and encourages some women to take a passive, "let the men take care of it" attitude. Male activists are usually unaware of how difficult it is for women to find time to get out of the house to come to a meeting. Mary Wentworth shared her experiences trying to organize working class women:

"They would say, 'If you call me and a man answers, hang up because I'm not allowed to have any friends that my husband doesn't know or approve of. He'll let me out of the house to do things for him—I can go grocery shopping but nothing else.' I don't think any mass

lear Destruction, other groups that have started in the last year are the Boston-based LUNA (Lesbians United for Non-nuclear Action), Spiderwort, an affinity group that occupied the North Anna nuclear power station in Virginia, the Cowrie Alliance from the Catskill region of New York, Solar Sisters, and FREE (Feminist Resources on Energy and Ecology) from Syracuse, New York.

## Honey

continued from p. 3

"Sugar Mama". Her music swelled into a gospel-style with the audience actively partaking, which spontaneously resulted in the chanting of 'Power!'

Sirani Avedis appeared with Kid Sister, an outstanding group which included congas, concert harp, a sax and flute. Sad to say Sirani lost her voice, but was able to play some of her lower range songs. Kid Sister filled in with a remarkable jam.

Teresa Trull emphasized Southern and gospel music, bringing the style into her body movements as well. Also exciting was Teresa's new British pianist Julie Homi, who did a multi-styled arrangement of Nina Simone's "Everything Must Change". Her music truly touched the depths of other worlds.

Alive! was indeed enlivening!! Their stage was set with candles alight, beautiful cloths, rugs and plants. They are a jazz ensemble bringing their music to imaginative places, carrying you emotionally right along. Adele Chu, a Jamaican woman danced sensuously and powerfully before us.

Rhiannon confronted us indignantly about the lack of Black womyn, and Black womyn performers, and the evidence of racism at the festival that this implied. As she pointed out, every song that was not written by the performers themselves was written by a Black woman—typical of the way white womyn use Black womyn's strength and culture without due acknowledgement or appreciation.

Black sisters then gathered on stage with Alive! to sing, dance and celebrate Black womyn. They all moved through the audience together with congos and

continued on p. 11

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# Are Women Good Sports?

By Ellen LaFleche

Until very recently, sports in America have been synonymous with the traditional male preserves of hockey, football, basketball and baseball. For attitudinal and economic reasons, women have been formally excluded from participation in sport. The muscular or athletically-inclined woman has been an object of derision. Exercise and movement for women have been of the "Slim-nastics" design, the final goal being to improve the feminine figure-flatten tummy and thighs, not to build muscles and endurance.

Millions of dollars are poured yearly into institutions such as Little League and college football and basketball, while most women's teams are scraping for pennies. Title IX was passed in 1972 to alleviate sex discrimination in school sport, but glaring inequalities still remain between men's and women's sports.

Institutionalized exclusion of women from organized sport results in deep psychic frustration and unhappiness to any woman who wishes to develop her physical skills. Unconditioned women will often appear to be weaker and more passive and may ultimately be more vulnerable to abuse by a mugger or rapist.

Most importantly, women's overall health, or wellness is threatened by lack of opportunity for exercise and sport: a regular program of aerobic exercise may strengthen the cardiovascular system, improve muscle tone and endurance, help with weight loss, and reduce stress by providing immeasurable psychological satisfaction. Physical exercise often helps a woman to become more at ease with her body and hence more attune to the needs and functionings of her own physiology.

Women's bodies contain greater a-

mounts of adipose (fat) tissue which may be a disadvantage in terms of quick, high energy events, but which provide an important physiological advantage in endurance sports such as a 50 mile marathon. Women's adipose tissue also provides the buoyancy and heat-retention needed during a long distance swim, or in other sports which involve immersion in water. Not surprisingly, events such as the 50 mile marathon or long-distance swimming are not high-status sports in a male-dominated culture. We should stop asking whether or not women can gain social acceptance by excelling at football, but think about the nature and potential of sports which could be developed by and for women, with the health and physiology of women in mind.

The primary motivation in sport and exercise should be joy and health. Competition itself is not inherently oppressive; in fact, healthy competition with



## Women Against Pornography

By Donna Meeks and Elizabeth Dworan

On Saturday, Sept. 15, and Sunday, Sept. 16, the First Annual Eastcoast Women Against Pornography Conference drew approximately 800 women to New York City, to hear Bella Abzug, Robin Morgan, E.M. Broner, Gloria Steinem, Phyllis Chesler, Dolores Alexander and Andrea Dworkin, among others, speak on issues as diverse as "Pornography and the First Amendment" and "Literature and Pornography".

The conference was ostensibly geared towards organizing and funding a March Against Pornography, to happen October 20 in the world re-nowned Times Square red-light district of New York.

Women Against Pornography has developed a slideshow with examples of themes frequently depicted in pornography. Women's supposedly inherent masochism is one of the more prevalent themes; pictures of battered women with suggestive smiles sell everything from records to high-fashion clothing in a recent issue of Vogue. Passivity and victimization of women are interwoven with themes of fascism, racism, classism, anti-semitism and heterosexism. There is Nazi porn, with a woman being spanked by "Hitler"; the black woman as castrator of black men; secretary porn, giving license and support to the image of the boss chasing his secretary around the desk. Lesbians are a special target, as seen in the slide in which relations between two women are implied and then denigrated when the loving takes

place above a toilet seat. The most vulnerable of targets - children - are illustrated as purveyors of adult sexual delights, desiring their abuse. A woman engages in self-mutilation. *Hustler* magazine's June '78 cover - the "last meat issue" - flashes on the screen, showing a woman's torso in a meat grinder.

As Robin Morgan observed, "Pornography is the theory, and rape is the practice." While its defenders plead porn's innocence as a harmless outlet for aggression that would otherwise wax violent, statistics are beginning to support the opposite contention. Gloria Steinem cited a recent study of men who were rapists that revealed the majority to be regular users of pornography. Sociologist Marvin Wolfgang, a member of the 1970 President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, has recently reversed his opinion on porn and violence, and substantiated connections between the two.

These same defenders accuse feminists of censorship; of denying the First Amendment guarantee of free speech and civil liberties. But, as Bella Abzug pointed out, concern for civil rights has always been slanted, in this case, in favor of white male pornographers! Where are women's civil rights, their right to protest and thereby defend themselves against institutionalized violence? asked Abzug. She stressed what was possible legislatively, once pornography is defined as violence, not sex.

Direct Action was discussed as a strategy to be carried out concurrently with legislative efforts. Rochester Women A-



Graphic by Denny Maloney

gainst Violence Against Women showed their videotape, "A Crime Against Women", documenting the arrests of four women for a successful protest of the porn film *Snuff*. The necessary components to Direct Action? - Quick mobilization, a high level of trust, and an ability to risk.

The conference ended with a panel of the WAP organizers, and an open-mike discussion at which several urgent issues were raised.

Women were angered by what they felt was a lack of outreach particularly towards poor women, Third World women, and lesbians. The literature could have been printed in Spanish, it was argued, and there could have been more of an effort to provide signers for the deaf. The mandatory \$10 registration fee with a work-exchange option was seen

as punitive towards poor women, whereas a sliding fee from \$3-20 might have been more equitable. In addition, some lesbians experience heterosexism in the form of invisibility. These feelings were compounded by apparent internal discord within the WAP group itself. Tensions rose, and the Conference ended on a shaky note.

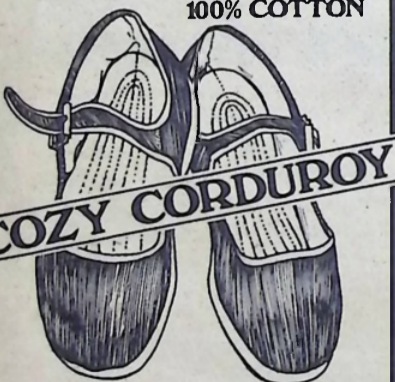
The level and quality of the workshops we attended were high. With certain exceptions, the conference was well organized and the rapport among the women there great. On the one hand, we felt terrific that the conference had happened. Violence against women is literally a life and death matter; the legislative and public influence wrought by the March could be tremendous - our internal problems seem small by comparison.

On the other hand, these disputes are very real. Colorblindness, in which a feminist could deny that Black or Hispanic women's experience vis-a-vis sexual violence is different than white women's, or that women of other cultures have different issues and need separate space, is still prevalent. Lesbians are still unacknowledged, providing much movement nurturance. The events of the Women Against Pornography Conference made clear not only the large-scale exigencies that lie before us, but all the internal work there is ahead for each of us. And, as the WAP posters publicizing the October March proclaim, "It's About Time!"

To find out about busloads and carpools leaving the Northampton/Amherst area for NYC on October 20th, contact Jody Cahn, at 549-4600 ext. 220, or Donna Meeks at 545-0883.

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**Monday 1**

**LESBIAN AL-ANON MEETING** ongoing discussion group for all lesbians whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking problem. Common Woman Club, 78 Masonic St., Northampton, 7:30-9pm. Call 5842062 or 7375403 for more info.

**BELLYDANCING:** Morning. Bellydancing is an ancient art form and a total body exercise for women. Mondays, October 1-December 3, 11 AM-12 Noon. \$20 YW members; \$23 nonmembers. Springfield YWCA, 26 Howard St., Spfld. Preregister with Marcia Willis, 7323121.

**Tuesday 2**

**BASIC SELF DEFENSE** 8 week course offered by Byrdie in Coolidge Dorm at UMass, 5th Floor lounge, 7-9:30. For more info call 5450626 or 6653625.

**BREAD AND BUTTER** Puppet Theatre presents *Washerwoman's Contata* in the Student Union Ballroom at UMass as a benefit for the Che La Lumba School. Tickets \$2.50, \$3.00 at the door. Available at Tix and Country Comfort.

**Wednesday 3**

**SUPPORT GROUP** starting for adult women who were sexually abused/assaulted as children. 11 weeks long, the group is cofacilitated and confidential. Leave message at Everywoman's Center.

**Thursday 4**

**ADRIENNE RICH**, noted feminist poet and author, will be at *Womonyre Books*, 68 Masonic Street, Northampton, from 4 to 6 p.m. She will be autographing copies of her books, and will be available for informal conversation with interested people. Refreshments will be served. For more information call 5866445.

**VALLEY WOMEN'S VOICE** Open Editorial Meeting for all women interested in writing or sharing ideas for the November issue. 7:00 p.m. at the Woman Club.

**Friday 5**

**MEG CHRISTIAN**, Chapin Auditorium, Mary E. Wooley Hall, Mt. Holyoke College. Childcare provided. 8 p.m. "WHAT YOUR DREAMS SAY" with Barbara Gingold, at the YWCA. "Nooning With A Difference" buffet lunch and speaker series. \$2 includes buffet lunch, 11:45 AM-12:15 PM, and speaker, 12:15-1:00 PM. Ms. Gingold will give an introduction to the Dream Workshop, a six week seminar being offered at the YWCA October 17. "Noonings" are held at the Springfield YWCA, 26 Howard Street, Springfield, every Friday. Phone reservations are required by 6:00 PM, October 3, 7323121.

**Saturday 6**

**JULIA BURROUGHS** performing at the Iron Horse, Northampton.

# Calendar

**Sunday 7**

**ART SHOW & SALE** for the benefit of the Springfield YWCA, 1:00-4:30 P.M. at the Hatch Library of Bay Path Junior College, 588 Longmeadow Street, Longmeadow. \$1 admission includes wine & cheese and may be applied toward purchase of art. All artists are nationally known: **MARY McCASLIN** will be performing at the Iron Horse. \$4.00 admission.

**Monday 8**

**OWLS** (Older Women's Lives) meeting open to all older women exploring personal growth and social change. Bangs Community Center at 7:30. For more info call 5862740. **VALLEY WOMEN'S MARTIAL ARTS** School begins its new schedule. Self-defense classes 7:45-8:45 p.m. at 284 Bridge St., Springfield MA. For more info, call Wendi Dragonfire at 7328118.

**Tuesday 9**

**WOMEN DEALING WITH COMPULSIVE EATING.** A 10 week group with Linda Tumbarella and Mary Asbrey, begins today. \$10/session. For more info, call Circa.

**WOMEN'S MEDIA NETWORK** meeting at 5 p.m. in 415A Student Union Building, UMass. New members welcome.

**BENOITE GIROULT**, columnist for "F" magazine, will give a talk on French feminist press and writing, at 7 P.M. Call Women's Studies office, UMass, for location.

**JEAN REDPATH** with songs from Ireland at The Chelsea House Folklore Center, Rt. 9 and Sunset Lake Rd., W. Brattleboro, VT. 8 p.m. Admission \$3.50.

**Friday 12 Sunday 14**

**CHRYSALIS THEATRE ECLECTIC** intensive weekend workshops. Play-building around issues for women and men. Theatre exercises, improvisation and group process skills. For further info contact Judith Katz at 5844504.

**Saturday 13**

**LESBIAN THERAPY**, focus on relationships with Sheryl Musio and Sylvia Rubin, \$10/session.

**WOMEN AGAINST PORNOGRAPHY** of NYC slideshow on themes in pornography, 2 p.m. Everywoman's Center, Wilder Hall. Discussion to follow. For info call Donna at EWC, 545-0883.

**PRESSBOARD**, stringband fronted by Diane Sonabria, and NE Banjo Champion at the IRON HORSE, Northampton.

**Sunday 14**

**IRENE YESNER-RINGAWA** at the East End Loft, 19 Hawley St., Northampton. 1. Doors open at 10 a.m., music begins at 11 a.m.

**CELIA FISHER**, Scottish Balladeer, at the Iron Horse. Admission \$2.50.

**NATIONAL MARCH ON WASHINGTON** For Lesbian and Gay Rights. For transportation and lodging information call 5843394.

**Monday 15**

**LESBIAN AL-ANON** meeting. Discussion group for all lesbians whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking problem. Common Woman Club, 78 Masonic Street, Northampton, 7:30. Call 5842602 or 7375403 for more info.

**OWLS** (Older Women's Lives) meeting open to all older women exploring personal growth and social change. Bangs Community Center at 7:30 p.m. For more info call 5862740.

**DRUMMER CLAIR ARENIUS** with Sonny Johnson at the Iron Horse.

**Wednesday 17**

**WHAT YOUR DREAMS SAY** workshop. A six week series on understanding and remembering your dreams and how they relate to our everyday lives and relationships with others. Wednesday, Oct 17-November 21, 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the Springfield WYCA, 26 Howard Street, Springfield. \$30 YW members; \$33 nonmembers. Preregister with Marcia Willis, 7323121. The instructor is Barbara Gingold, a social worker for Child & Family Service of Springfield, Inc.

**GREATER SPRINGFIELD N.O.W.** general meeting (Eastfield Mall Community Room, Boston Road, Springfield, MA. Enter the Mall from the back entrance near Peerless.) Program: **Feminist Consciousness Raising.** A miniCR demonstration run by Ann Novak, Northeast Regional Consciousness Raising Coordinator. For more info call Colette Roberts (5254023) or Grace Makepeace (283-8143). General Meetings are open to anyone interested in NOW and/or the program.

**Friday 19**

"**WOMEN IN JAIL**," a slide presentation of life for women in the York Street Jail and how the community can be involved, with Rosalind Caner, Director of the YWCA Female Offender Program at the YWCA "Nooning with a Difference" buffet lunch & speaker series, 26 Howard Street, Springfield. \$2 includes buffet lunch 11:45-12:15 and speaker, 12:15-1:00. Phone reservations are required by Wednesday, Oct. 17, 6:00 p.m.

**Sunday 21**

**ABORTION RIGHTS VIGIL** in Northampton.

**Monday 22**

**OWLS** (Older Women's Lives) meeting open to all older women exploring personal growth and social change. Bangs Community Center, Amherst, at 7:30 p.m. For more info call 5862740.

**Tuesday 23**

**WOMEN'S MEDIA NETWORK** is sponsoring a film series, starting with **Blow for Blow**, a film about women who organize to better their working conditions by occupying the factory. 8 p.m. UMass Campus Center, Rm. 904. For info call 5862456.

**Wednesday 24**

**PAT DECOU AND TEX LA MOUNTAIN** perform at the Iron Horse, 8:30 p.m.

**Thursday 25**

**MARGO CULLEY** will give a talk on women's diaries, Thompson, 6th floor lounge.

**DIANE GELON**, one of the original organizers of the "Dinner Party" exhibition (a work conceived by Judy Chicago and executed by a community of over 400 artists) will lecture at Herter Art Gallery, UMass. Ms. Gelon will be speaking about the exhibit, how it was conceived and executed, and what is happening with it at present. For more info about the talk, or the accompanying benefit, call Janet Feldman at 5450976 (Gallery) or 549-5582 (home). Location and time still uncertain, so watch for further details.

**Sunday 28**

**PREMIER** of 23 minute video tape on population growth in Hampden/Hampshire counties "Be Fruitful & Multiply . . . But Only a Little." *Faith United Church, 52 Sumner Ave., Springfield*, sponsored by Zero Population Growth. 5:00 p.m., pot luck supper. Video tape viewed on Channel 57's Open Door Program at 6:00. For info call Eileen Pratt in Spfld., 782-6286 or Lorraine Remillard in Northampton 5846513.

**Tuesday 30**

**WOMEN'S MEDIA NETWORK** film series will show three films on women's history, *The Emerging Woman*, *Musereel No. 1: Tapestry of Woman-spirit*, and *Pictures*. 8 p.m., UMass, Campus Center, rm. 904. For more info, call 5862456.

**Wednesday 31**

**WOMANCRAFT**, a course in psychic self-healing will start in Greenfield with Jean-Janani Erlbaum. Call 7739744 for further information.

**Sistersong to produce Alive!**

Sistersong Productions is trying to bring ALIVE! to this area, but needs local women's groups to help sponsor them. If you or your organization can donate any money to bring this amazing women's group here call Erin at 584-3394.

**Homebirth Classes**

Homebirth, Inc., a non-profit, parent-run organization is sponsoring a series of 8 classes in homebirth preparation for interested couples, beginning the end of October, in the Springfield area. For more information call Denise at 743-2726.

**Women's Media Resource Directory**

The Women's Media Network is compiling a resource list of women in media and women artists in the Valley. If you are a filmmaker, musician, photographer, journalist, writer, painter, dancer, visual artist, or work with video or radio, please send us any information you would like included in such a resource file. Women's Media Network, RSO 108, UMass, Amherst, 01003.

## Announcements

**Public Service Announcement**

The Mental Patients Advocacy Project (an affiliate of Western Massachusetts Legal Services) provides free legal services for all recipients of community mental health services. The project is designed to assist former patients with legal problems experienced in daily life in the community, including job and housing discrimination due to mental status, public assistance, confidentiality of records, quality of community mental health services, access to social services, and problems related to recipients of mental health care. Legal advocates are available in Springfield, Holyoke, Westfield, Pittsfield, Northampton, and Greenfield. To schedule and appointment call Legal Services at Northampton State Hospital at 584-1644 ext. 265. Monday through Friday.

**Lesbian/Gay Rights March**

The Western Mass. Steering Committee for the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights is arranging transportation to and lodging for the March. For more info send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to 215 Crescent St., Northampton, Ma. 01060 or call 584-3394.

**Springfield Women's Radio**

"Half the Sky," a radio show for and about women produced by Gina Nelms, is now being broadcast on Wednesdays, 11:30pm on WNUS. 1500 AM in West Springfield.

October's topics to be covered tentatively include: An Interview with HERA (Hotline to End Rape and Abuse) on October 3; Coverage of the Boston Conference on Women and Economic Justice; Women and Health Issues on October 17; ERA discussion with Maureen Solomon on October 24, and on

October 31, a Halloween Witchcraft and Women's Heritage program, with interviews with practicing witches in the Valley.

**Smith Women In Science**

The Smith Women In Science organization will be giving a series of lectures. Fall semester lecturers and their topics include Vera Kistiakowsky, Nuclear Science, M.I.T., on "The Current Status of Women in the Sciences"; Lilli Hornig, Wellesley Center for Higher Education, on "Obstacles to Women: Scientific Sexism"; Ruth Moulton, Wm. Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry, "Psychological Challenges and Women's Creativity"; Janet Welsh Brown, Environmental Defense Fund, "Political Power"; and Anna Harrison from Mount Holyoke College, on "Enhancing the Participation of Women in Science: Individual Motivation."

All lectures will be open to the public. Additional information about the program may be obtained from Leslie Meyer or Kathryn Pearlstone, Clark Science Center.

## Honey

other percussion. We were on our teet dancing, moving and feeling power together as we sang "Come together, move together with respect and dignity." Then a Sister Sledge tape of "We are Family" came over the sound system as we danced to the end of the wonderful festival.

A silence came over us, hands held high in the air and one note sounded from each woman deep inside, forming a larger sound emanating as one. Silence came again to the 8000 of us, broken only by one woman's assertive voice, "I don't wanna go home!" Who did??

Although there are vital political implications that come out of the festival - information, and skill sharing, this is an attempt to describe the feeling of the festival and what went on for those women who weren't there.

Suffice it to say that we were 8000 women, living, eating, and working together, *surviving* - and that is profoundly political, as, in the words of Audre Lorde, "We were never meant to survive."

## Sports

*continued from p. 9*

oneself or others often inspires women to achieve above and beyond their highest expectations. Health and satisfaction are lost and unhealthy stress is generated when competition becomes the sole motivation in sport.

It is important, then, that women who participate in sport or exercise make creative value decisions about competition. Competition need not be an all or nothing issue; it may be exhilarating to run or swim non-competitively with friends on a weekly basis, and also to race in a formal competition two or three times a year. A woman who decides to participate solely in non-competitive sport should be supported, as should a woman who chooses to compete in

ball and track..

Jogging and running have become national passions in the past few years. Yet, an hour's job may not be accessible exercise for women who are strapped for time, who are exhausted after a day's work, who have a chronic health condition, or who live in a town or city where it is not safe for a woman to be jogging alone in the streets. There is an element of privilege in sport for pleasure which must be recognized. As women continue to make great strides (no pun!) in sport, part of the task is to provide a range of options for all women, young or old, rich or poor, able-bodied or disabled.

Finally it is crucial that sport not become, like housework or a career, simply another activity that women feel obliged to participate in. The decision to exercise our bodies must be made freely. We must not be made to feel guilty if we choose not to swim or run or play tennis - only to feel healthy and joyful if we do.

So, women athletes and non-athletes, UNITE!

## ERA

*continued from p. 4*

will be whether or not the United States ratifies the Equal Rights Amendment.

The fight for equal rights is not for ourselves alone; it is for generations to come. You can join this fight, and you do not have to be a NOW member to do so. All you have to do is believe in women; in our right to equality under the law; our right to make choices for ourselves; our right to fulfill our own potentials.

Think about it. And the next time you receive your paycheck, remember "59¢!" Then call Grace Makepeace (283-8143), Colette Roberts (525-4023) or Maureen Solomon (267-5172) and find out what you can do to help. Isn't it time you started earning the whole dollar?

(For further information, you can contact: Greater Springfield NOW, P.O. Box 1312, Springfield, Ma 01101.)

## Abortion Action

During the week of October 22 to 29, a wide variety of educational and political activities will be held in the Pioneer Valley as part of the national Abortion Rights Action Week. The week is planned to bring national attention to the encroachments on women's reproductive rights through the ongoing attacks on women's equal access to safe, low-cost abortion.

All during the week, information tables will be set up on campuses and in the community. In addition, films and special workshops and speakers will be sponsored on the campuses. At the University of Massachusetts, the Socialist Feminist Caucus plans two workshops: one on reproductive health issues and women workers on campus, the other on the anti-abortion movement and the New Right. Further publicity with dates, times and locations of activities will be posted in the area. For more information, call Terri, 584-3150.

Locally, the week's activities will begin with a vigil on Sunday, October 22 in Northampton to highlight the issue of separation of church and state which is central to the abortion struggle. While Boston prepares for the pomp and circumstance of the Pope's visit, we should remember that the Church hierarchy has played center stage in the anti-abortion movement. From busing anti-choice marchers to Washington, encouraging weekly anti-abortion sermons, sponsoring parochial school letter writing campaigns and "Respect Life" church collections, the Church hierarchy has attempted to impose its religious position on the country (this in spite of the fact that surveys show that the large majority of practicing Catholics support a woman's private right to decide whether or not to have an abortion).

Another target of the week's activities will be a petition drive directed at Rep. Silvio Conte. In 1978, Conte voted anti-choice for all seven abortion-related roll call votes in Congress. While he supported a family planning bill in 1979, Conte has persisted in taking an anti-choice abortion stand. The petition drive will culminate in a public demonstration at Conte's office in Holyoke.

## Letters *continued from p.2,*

workshop. In the middle of the week this "ad hoc group" asked that women begin to validate speaking from our own experiences as much as our academic research, and we also raised the need for proposals for action to come from the entire group. The initiative for this group did come largely from grass roots organizer's but many academic and professional women joined and formed important alliances that will have impact, we hope, lasting far beyond the workshop itself.

There are some other factual corrections we want to make. Laura Punnett described the New England Hospital for Women and Children in the context of a larger discussion of women-controlled research which also covered women-controlled contraception, such as menstrual extraction. The presentation stressed that women-controlled research is ethically preferable and, not coincidentally, better for women's health than methods and experimentation controlled by the male-dominated medical profession.

Two women from Women's Community Health Center, in Cambridge, not the Boston Women's Collective, discussed the use of mucous observation as women-controlled birth control in contrast to the Billings Ovulation Method which is taught through a Catholic and male-dominated structure and theology. Carol Kornbro's belief that more effective contraceptive methods are also the riskiest is not a proven or scientific conclusion; women-controlled natural birth control is one example of a method which is both effective and safe. Also, it is very confusing and misleading for you to equate "safest" with "lowest incidence of pregnancy" as though "side effects" were not significant safety considerations in themselves.

We are happy to see the Valley Women's Voice covering events of importance to women, and suggest that in the future you be more aware of and explicit about the viewpoints and limitations of the sources of your information. Thank you.

*Terry Courtney*

Women's Community Health Center,  
Laura Punnett

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Classified Rates are \$3.00 for a 3 line minimum (at 40 characters per line). \$.30 for each additional line with a 10% discount for 3 months. Prepayment required.

## HOUSING

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## INSTRUCTION


Folk guitar lessons for women with experienced, supportive teacher. Lessons are directed toward helping you find your own musical expression. Will travel. Call Judy Polan 12964420.

Problem Solving Group for Women is being offered by Elysium. There will be information, support, and clarification of the issues around solving problems. We will look at our present techniques of solving problems and develop new tools. One group will meet Tuesday evenings from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. beginning October 30th and a second group will meet Monday afternoons from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. beginning October 29th. There will be a fee and advanced registration. For more information call Lois Anne 5848701.

New Mothers' and Pregnant Women's Group is being offered by Elysium. Motherhood—what a change! Let's get together and discuss how motherhood affects our lives, bodies, relationships and how the world views us. We will share a variety of useful information. There will be two troupes: Monday evenings 7:30-9:30 (starting Monday October 29) and Tuesday afternoon from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. (starting October 30th). There will be a fee and advanced registration. For more information call Lois Anne, 5848701.

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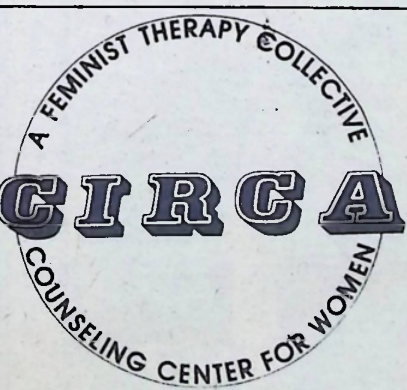
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**BOOK REVIEW**

# Fat Is A Feminist Issue

**FAT IS A FEMINIST ISSUE: A Self-help Guide for Compulsive Eaters**  
by Susie Orbach  
Grosset & Dunlap, \$8.95 hardcover  
Berkeley Publishing Corp., \$2.25 paper

Review by Heather Johnson

Women who are fat actually want to be fat, says Susie Orbach in her book, *Fat is a Feminist Issue*. Orbach, a therapist specializing in the treatment of compulsive eating, asserts that the desire to be fat, although unconscious, is a protest against stereotyped female behavior identified with thinness. Fat women fear thinness because thin means such things as being a sexual object, being vulnerable, competing with other women, not being taken seriously as a person, and being a success. Fat can also be a powerful protection and will represent different things to different women—strength, substance, personal boundary, anger, desexualization—whatever helps a woman deal with her particular situation.

In Orbach's therapy groups, women come to understand what fat and thin mean to them and then learn to see that the power they attribute to their fat is actually the power of their essential self—so that when they lose weight they do not feel they lose their identity, power or protection. In this way, they remain comfortable with themselves when thin and are more likely to stay thin.

Orbach also presents an interesting analysis of compulsive eaters—those persons who eat mainly from psychological hungers and who often find themselves in a binge-diet syndrome. Compulsive eaters, Orbach reveals, are addicted to food but actually fear it rather than enjoy it (they usually have friends or lovers hide food from them or

lock the kitchen door). Orbach's program for compulsive eaters involves overcoming this fear of food and learning to eat whatever is wanted whenever it is physiologically (and not psychologically) wanted.

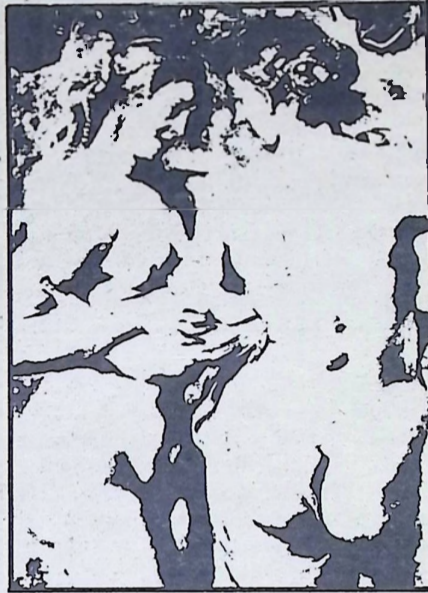
Although these observations are intriguing, some aspects of Orbach's work are troubling. For one, she does not clearly distinguish compulsive eating from being fat—she admits that some compulsive eaters are not fat, but she



Courtesy of L'Officiel

doesn't seem to make clear that many fat women are not compulsive eaters. In fact, she only briefly remarks at the end of her book that studies show that some fat women eat less than thin women. She criticizes those medical approaches to

weight loss which ignore psychological or sociological factors and which do violence to women's bodies—surgical, diet and drug therapies—and this is a justifiable indictment. But in focusing



Detail from Rubens painting

on psychological causes for obesity and passing over the medical ones, she comes close to blaming the victim, in spite of her intention to enable women to take charge of their bodies. For this reason, her book, as her paperback subtitle suggests, is most valuable for those women who are both fat and compulsive eaters.

More disturbing, given the title of the book, is that she proposes fatness as a response to sexism, recognizing that in this society "our images of womanhood are almost synonymous with thinness."

Yet she seems to be offering her method to adjust to that definition without fully examining why these women should become thinner at all. The fact that she deals mainly with compulsive eaters rather than fat women in general prevents her from addressing adequately the sexist attitudes which oppress fat women, deny them jobs, their sexuality, etc. and deny thin women a self other than a sexual one. True, she tries to get women in her groups to accept themselves when fat, but only, it seems, as a first step towards accepting themselves when thinner.

It should be mentioned that the women with whom Orbach worked were white, working-to-upper-middle class women from the U.S., Canada and England, so her analysis is definitely race and culture bound, something she admits in her preface. I suggest that anyone who reads this book also read publications printed by the Fat Liberation Front which challenge many of the myths about fatness (that fat is necessarily unhealthy, that fat persons eat more than thin persons, etc.). These publications mention, for instance, that fat women who are not persecuted for being fat (e.g. blue collar, Italian Americans) have rates of heart disease and diabetes below the national average for slim people and that going on and off diets is more harmful than maintaining a high weight. Clearly, more research hazards of fatness can be accepted or dismissed. Nonetheless, *Fat is a Feminist Issue* is worth looking at for its insights into compulsive eating, into anorexia nervosa, and into the meaning of body shape, size and power for women in this society.

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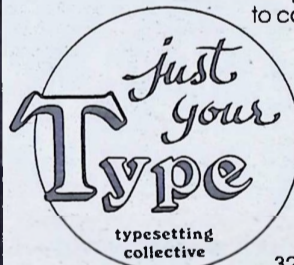
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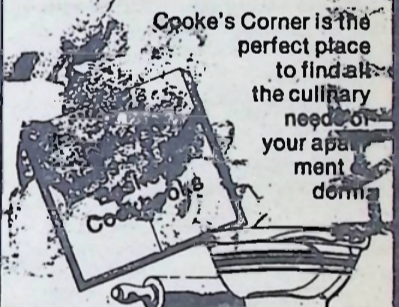
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